

August 31, 2001

Secretary Mary Selecky
Washington Department of Health
1300 SE Quince
PO Box 47890
Olympia, Washington 98504-7890

Dear Secretary Selecky:

I am writing to request that you consider asking the legislature to exempt the Board from the restrictions placed on fee setting by Initiative-601 so that it has the ability to raise the food worker card fee. We learned from the Attorney General's Office that revising the food worker card fee pursuant to RCW 69.06.020 is restricted by I-601. Melissa Burke-Cain's memorandum is attached for your reference. I understand that DOH includes a list of programs requesting exemptions to the I-601 fee restrictions in its operating budget. I ask that you consider adding the food worker card fee to this list.

As you may already be aware, the Board signed a CR-101 indicating the Board's intention to consider raising the fee for food worker cards in November 1999. (Attached) The \$8.00 fee was established in rule by the Board in 1991 and has not been raised since. However, the costs of doing business and complying with the Board's additional training requirements have increased. The Board heard from several local health jurisdictions that the current fee of \$8.00 per card did not reflect the actual cost of food worker training, testing, and administration. RCW 69.06.020 directs the Board to set the fee for food worker cards that is commensurate with these training, testing, and administrative costs.

In January 2000, the Board revised WAC 246-217, adding an extra 30 minutes of interactive training to the standard training required to obtain a food worker card. In order to evaluate the efficacy of this rule change, Board member Carl Osaki asked the Environmental Health Directors' Food Committee to survey the local health jurisdictions (LHJs) to determine the value and cost associated with implementing the additional training requirement. The Food Committee conducted a more targeted survey of costs

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associated with issuing food worker cards in May 2001. These surveys are attached for your reference. The May 2001 survey, with 22 of 24 LHJs responding, indicates that while some of the larger LHJs may be able to recover their costs with a slight increase to \$10-\$12, the majority of the small and medium LHJs note their costs ranging from \$10 - \$16 per card.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Linda Lake
Chair

Cc: Washington State Board of Health Members
Bill White, Department of Health
Jennifer Tebaldi, Department of Health
John Thayer, Klickitat County Department of Public Health
Marianne Seifert
Don Sloma